

Understanding Treatment Options for COVID-19

Last Update: 5/24/2023

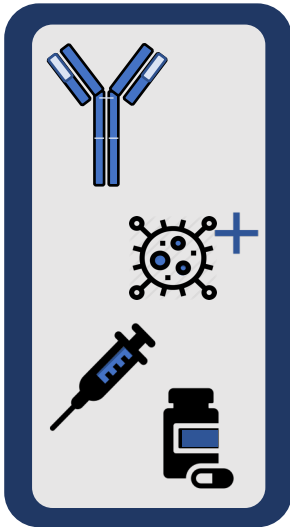


NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

As a contact tracer or case investigator, you may receive questions from case patients, contacts, or loved ones in your community regarding the latest COVID-19 treatment options, including the use of antiviral pills. **This document will provide you with basic facts that you can share with others.**

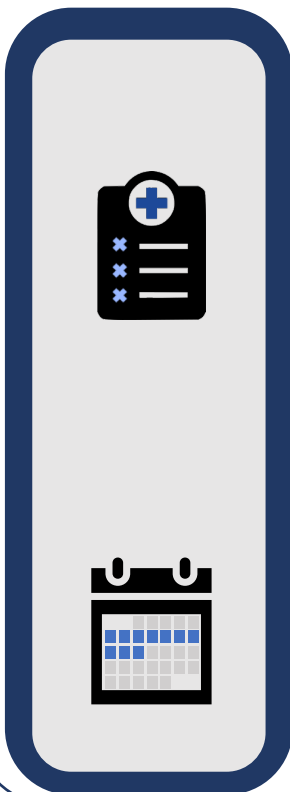
This information is provided for your reference only to help you respond to questions raised by others. You should not provide medical advice or recommend any course of treatment.

What are COVID-19 treatments? How are they different from the vaccine?



- **Antiviral pills for treatment of COVID-19** are oral treatments that work to keep the COVID-19 virus from replicating, thereby reducing viral load and symptom severity. Antiviral pills must be started within 5 days of symptom onset and requires a prescription.
- Antiviral pills have received an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) as a treatment option for mild to moderate COVID-19 in certain high-risk case patients. **Antivirals reduce risk of severe symptoms and/or hospitalization** in certain high-risk individuals.
- **They do not replace vaccines**, which protect from COVID-19 by triggering the body's natural immune response and provide the best protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and death.

Who is eligible for COVID-19 treatments and when?



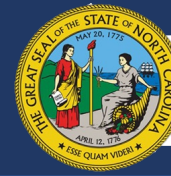
WHO

WHEN

- **High-risk adults and youth (age 12 and older who weigh at least 88lbs) may be eligible for treatment. High-risk factors include:**
 - Older age (>50)
 - Obesity or being overweight
 - Pregnancy
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Cerebral palsy or other developmental conditions
 - Other non-medical factors such as race or ethnicity may also put individuals at higher risk for severe COVID-19
 - A weakened immune system
 - Heart disease including high blood pressure
 - Lung disease such as COPD, asthma, or cystic fibrosis
 - Sickle cell disease
 - Regular use of a feeding tube or ventilator
 - Diabetes
- **Treatments must be administered:**
 - As soon as possible after a positive COVID-19 test result **and**
 - **FOR ANTIVIRALS:** within 5 days of a person's first COVID-19 symptoms. These pills cannot be used longer than 5 days.

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How can an individual find COVID-19 treatment?



If a contact or a case patient expresses interest in oral antiviral pills treatment, **direct them to speak to a healthcare provider.** You cannot provide medical advice or recommend treatment.

For additional resources to receive COVID-19 Treatment:

1. Test to Treat is an important way to quickly access treatment for COVID-19. Through this program, individuals can get tested, and if found positive, can receive appropriate prescriptions and have them filled all in one location. Visit covid19.ncdhhs.gov/FindTreatment to find a location.
2. Visit the [Combat COVID](https://www.combatcovid.com) website or call CDC's Testing & Treatment hotline, 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

*Note that all COVID-19 treatments **require** a clinical assessment by a healthcare professional. If interested, direct the individual to speak to a healthcare provider. Further details regarding COVID-19 treatments can be found [here](#).*

People who have immunocompromising conditions or have a severe allergy to COVID-19 vaccines may qualify for [preventative treatment](#).

What are the currently available COVID-19 Treatments?



Oral Antivirals

- [Paxlovid](#) (Pfizer treatment pill)
- [Lagevrio](#) (molnupiravir) (Merck treatment pill)

What is the cost of COVID-19 Treatments?



- Federal Test to Treat [locations](#) provide antiviral pills at no cost to uninsured individuals; however, there may be a cost for testing and evaluation.
- Medicare, Medicaid, and some private insurance companies may cover treatment.

Visit <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/treatment> for more information about COVID-19 treatments.

Note that these treatments are not a substitute for a vaccination against COVID-19.

Visit [MySpot.nc.gov](https://myspot.nc.gov) to schedule a vaccine near you.